



Official
Newsletter
of the
Fort Vancouver
Trades Guild

THE forge & plane

VOLUME VII, NUMBER 4

FALL 2009

Williamsburg Weekend: Shelton Browder returns to the Fort Vancouver Forge

WILLIAMSBURG master blacksmith Shelton Browder returned to the Fort Vancouver blacksmiths forge October 29–31 for his fourth consecutive demonstration. The list of fort artifacts that Shel had reproduced over the past three years was already lengthy, and this year he added a trowel; a beaver trap, complete with oil tempered spring and all the fixings; a string winder; and a rake.

All three days of the demonstration were well attended. A new feature this year was a book sale, an inspired idea of President Craig Webster, that generated some much-needed funds for the guild treasury. The optional dinner, held Friday evening at McMenamins Chapel Pub, was extra-enjoyable because attendees could view and appreciate ironwork by



Photo: M. Gawecki

Above: Shelton Browder with an intent audience
Below: Working a trap spring



Photo: H. Newton

O. B. Dawson without trekking up Mt. Hood to Timberline Lodge.

Terry Danyleyko, an interpretive guide for Parks Canada at Lower Fort Garry, definitely won the long-distance award. He traveled to Vancouver from his home in Selkirk, Manitoba, about thirty miles north of Winnipeg.

The guild would like to thank Ike and Kathy Bay for once again hosting Shel during his visit here. We are indebted to them for their unfailing generosity and hospitality. 🌿

Note: See page 6 for detailed photos of some of the reproductions Shel produced for the workshop.



Photo: M. Gawecki

David Stearns (R) checks on Craig Webster's progress.

Williamsburg hands-on follow up

GUILD MEMBERS David Stearns, Jac Arnal, Craig Webster, Harry Newton and Susan Gawecki participated in a day-long session at the shop trying to replicate items Shelton Browder had made during the Williamsburg Weekend workshop. David served as instructor for the rest of the smiths

in their attempts to duplicate Shel's reconstructions of some of Fort Vancouver's archival beaver traps. No one who was there will ever look at a beaver trap with quite the same eyes again. (That's what happens when you get off the bench and pick up the bat — oops, the hammer.) 🍷



Photo: S. Gawecki

No aprons or feather dusters, but some honest dirty hands
From L to R: Clay Ford, George Rupp, Gideon Douglas, Jerry Armstrong, and Craig Webster

Don't believe your mom: Once a year really is enough . . .

ON SEPTEMBER 26, guild members got together for the annual shop cleanup. Gideon Douglas, Craig Webster, Jerry Armstrong, George Rupp, Andrew McConathy, John Christiansen, Clay Ford, Harry Newton, and Jeff Cawley dusted, oiled and organized the shop. Many thanks for all the hard work! 🍷

NWBA's 30th anniversary conference

THE NORTHWEST Blacksmith Association held its 30th annual conference October 22 – 25 in Chehalis, Washington. The conference drew a good crowd according to guild members and others from the Fort Vancouver community who were there. The NWBA Education Committee had set up about ten forging stations, which were used steadily by an assortment of wannabees, dabblers, kids young and old, serious folk, and professionals. New this year were the Blacksmith Wars, a competition among teams of blacksmiths to create an iron frieze. Ryan Wilson, swinging his hammer into the early morning hours, represented Fort Vancouver. Bob Race was an instructor at the open forging station and gave the gathering a thumbs up. 🍷



Photos: G. Lewis



Top: Two Bobs taking a break (Connor, L, and Race, R)
Bottom: Hammer-in, NWBA style

Guild business: Due\$ are (over)due!!!

ANNUAL DUES are technically due July 1, at the beginning of our fiscal year, but enforcing payment has not been a guild strong point. Our list of current and past members has 95 people. Of those, only 36 have paid 2009 dues. Guild officers believe it is time to begin purging the deadbeats. Please pay your dues as soon as possible if you want to continue as a guild member.

NOTE: Due to a very busy Williamsburg Weekend, the guild general meeting and board meeting scheduled for October 30 were cancelled.

Make your check payable to Fort Vancouver Trades Guild and send it to treasurer Ted Anderson, 4505 NW Lincoln Avenue, Vancouver, WA 98663, or leave a check in Ted's folder the next time you visit the shop. Thank you. 🍷

Membership Fees

Regular	\$10.00
Junior	\$ 4.00
Family	\$14.00
Patron	\$100.00
(one time gift of \$100 or more)	

FORT CALENDAR

Lantern Tours

Saturdays December 5 & 19, January 10 & 24
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Carry your own lantern and tour the fur store, the counting house, and the bake house with a park ranger to learn about life at Fort Vancouver after sunset.

\$10 adults, \$7 children under 15

Reservations required 360-816-6230

Heritage Holidays at the McLoughlin House

Join staff and volunteers in holiday preparations for the 1850s

Saturday, December 5, 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

McGloughlin House, Oregon City

No admission charge

Christmas at Fort Vancouver

Celebrate with 1800s Victorian Christmas snacks and songs

Saturday, December 12, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Reconstructed Fort & Visitor Center

Individuals \$3, Families \$5

Contact the park at 360-816-6230
or visit www.nps.gov/fova for more information on any of the events above.

Newsletters for blacksmiths

THE FOLLOWING is a list of blacksmithing groups that offer a current free newsletter that you can download from their website without being a member. (*List courtesy of Bobby Floyd, editor, Old Dominion Blacksmith Association, updated June 1, 2009*).

Balcones Forge

www.balconesforge.org

Blacksmith Association of Missouri

www.bamsite.org

Blacksmith's Guild of the Potomac

www.bgop.org

Central States Metal Artisans

<http://gpba.abana-chapter.com/>

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

www.blacksmithing.org/

Kentucky Blacksmiths' Association

<http://ky.abana-chapter.com/>

New Jersey Blacksmith Association

<http://njba.abana-chapter.com/>

continued on last page

2010 EVENTS FOR BLACKSMITHS

Blacksmithing Basics & Beyond

Old West Forge, White Salmon, WA

February 19 – 22

Additional Information

Tim Maddaugh tim@oldwestforge.com

509-493-4418

Oregon Knife Collectors Association Show

Saturday April 17, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Sunday April 18, 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Nonmember admission: \$6/day

Additional information

www.oregonknifeclub.org

ABANA Conference

June 2 – 5

AgriCenter International

Memphis, TN

Additional information

www.abana.org/

Classes for Blacksmiths at Meridian Forge

ART DECO GRILL

Instructor: Gary Eagle

March 19 – 21 Fee: \$350

WESTERN STATES BLACKSMITHING

CURRICULUM BASIC

Instructor: Mark Aspery

April 2 – 4

GARDEN GATE

Instructor: Darryl Nelson; Limited to 5 students

May 14 – 16 Fee: \$475

For more information, contact the Meridian Forge

37010 Meridian East, Eatonville, WA 98328

360-832-6280 or 253-318-1842

firemtforge@hotmail.com

Local industrial blacksmithing

AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS, the locks on the Willamette River at West Linn will open next year, when months of repair are completed. There are seven gates in the locks; the largest weighs over 130,000 pounds. The locks were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Their website www.willamettefalls.org/ has some good local history that should be of particular interest to blacksmiths.🔥

A Short History of Matches

MAN HAS HAD THE USE of fire for a long, long time, but matches, as we know them, fall within the lives of our grandparents or great-grandparents.

The element phosphorous was isolated or discovered in 1669. Although some early attempts were made to use phosphorous for fire lighting items, no commercially successful application was made for about 160 years. In 1827, John Walker, an English chemist, made some of the first matches

The first matches, using sulfur, were shortly marketed as *Lucifers*. While popular with smokers, they had a very bad burning odor.

using sulfur, and they were shortly marketed, by one Samuel Jones, as *lucifers*. While popular with smokers, they had a very bad burning odor.

In 1830, a French chemist, Charles Sauria, created a match made with white phosphorous. These matches did not have the odor problem of *lucifers*, but the white phosphorous was poisonous. This later became a major issue for workers in match factories, children who might suck on a match, and smokers who would inhale fumes from lighting up.

In 1855 Johan Edvard Lundstrom, of Sweden, patented safety matches. These matches had red phosphorus in a sandpaper strip on the side of the box. This lowered the



problem of white phosphorus and made Sweden and, later, Swedish-owned companies dominant in match making. Yet the white phosphorus matches remained around because of their strike-anywhere factor.

Joshua Pusey invented the matchbook in 1889. After a patent battle, the Diamond Match Company, which had developed a similar idea, bought out Pusey.

In 1910, the Diamond Match Company patented the first nonpoisonous match in the U.S., using a safe chemical called sesquisulfide of phosphorous. At the urging of President William H. Taft, Diamond Match Company released their patent for these safe matches in early 1911. Congress then placed a very high tax on white phosphorous matches and their production and use ended. 🌱

Reprinted from the Appalachian Blacksmiths Association Newsletter, March 2009

Some of Shelton Browder's Replications of Fort Vancouver Artifacts from Williamsburg Weekend 2009



Photos: S. Gawecki

Clockwise, from top left: Trap Base, Trap Pan, Rake, Hoe

The Fort Vancouver Trades Guild *Christmas Potluck Celebration*

for volunteers, spouses & immediate families

Saturday, December 12
5:00 – 7:00 pm
Fort Bakery and Kitchen

Please bring an hors-d'oeuvre or a snack and utensils to serve it with.

The guild will provide turkey and ham, tableware, and nonalcoholic beverages (no alcohol is permitted on Fort property).

Two reminders: first, there are only a few electrical outlets in the bakery and kitchen, and second, the walk from the parking lot is dark, so be sure to bring a flashlight.

RSVP to Craig Webster by December 5, (360) 696-1759 craigw@pacifier.com. (If you're not sure you can make it, please let us know that, too.)

Notes from the President

HELLO, EVERYONE. I would like to thank all of you who helped put on another successful Williamsburg Weekend. Shelton Browder was here once again, showing his considerable skills, to demonstrate a high level of blacksmithing for us to strive for. Attendance was very good again this year. We had \$1,440 in registration fees and \$1,280 in expenses, so the event ran a profit of \$160. We also held a book sale to distribute books from the estate of Tom Richards. This sale brought in an additional \$677.17. Many members paid their dues during the workshop, and Eugene Carroll made a generous \$100 donation. Our total net income during the Williamsburg Weekend, including dues and the book sale proceeds, was \$1,107, making it the most financially successful workshop to date. At this point the guild has cash assets of \$4,514.

We recently held the first of our monthly free hands-on workshops. Leader Dave Stearns covered some of the projects that Shel had demonstrated. Those who attended received some valuable personal instruction. (I need to work hotter, but I did manage to complete a drop tong forge weld — and it stuck.) My plan is for the guild to sponsor a hands-on workshop for volunteer blacksmiths on the first Saturday of each month. Subjects and instructors will vary, so this is a chance to hone different skills with some of our most experienced smith-craftsmen. The December 5 workshop focuses on making hardies, but there will also be a chance for general tool-making questions and discussion. Bill DeBerry is the instructor, so come in for some expert toolmaking advice and learn what Bill looks like when he is actually in the shop. More on workshops: I would also like to start some guild carpentry workshops, so if you have any ideas on what should be covered, let me know.

In each issue of the *F&P* I hope to publish answers for commonly asked interpretative questions. If you get questions that you're not quite clear about how to answer, let me

know, and I will try to research them. The following information, all centering on traps, is the first installment of Interpretative Q&A

How many traps were made in the shop?

We do not have an actual figure for numbers of traps manufactured in the shop. However, it would be safe to say that there were thousands of traps made here. The blacksmith shop was in operation for at least twenty years. There were at least a hundred trappers sent out from Fort Vancouver to the three main regions: south, New Caledonia, and Snake River. Each trapper was responsible for six to eight traps, so altogether that's about 600 traps. Say that a sixth of these needed replacement each year. A hundred traps a year for twenty years is 2,000.

Were the traps redesigned?

Based on information in Gerstel's *The Steel Trap in North America*, traps in use during the early to mid 1800s were about the size of traps that were found here. Modern traps are much smaller than the historic traps which may account for confusion about trap size.

How long did it take to make a trap?

The Fort Vancouver blacksmiths did not make traps: they made trap parts and put them together. Bill, working alone, needs at least 16 to 20 hours to make a complete set of trap parts. To assemble a trap from parts takes about a half hour, assuming that the parts are properly made — a big assumption. So, roughly 21 to 22 hours to make a trap.🦊

—Craig Webster, Guild President 2009-2010

FORT VANCOUVER TRADES GUILD CALENDAR

GUILD HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Saturday, December 5

Hardies: Creation, Care, and Feeding

Instructor: Bill DeBerry

FIRST ANNUAL GUILD CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday, December 12

GUILD HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Saturday, January 9

Instructor: Jeff Cawley

Newsletters for blacksmiths

continued from page 4

Northeast Blacksmiths Association

www.northeastblacksmiths.org/

North Texas Blacksmiths Association

<http://home.flash.net/~dvwilson/ntba/>

Old Dominion Blacksmith Association

www.odbsa.com

Southwest Artist-Blacksmith Association

www.swaba-abana-chapter.org

Tidewater Blacksmith's Guild

www.tidewaterblacksmiths.com

Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association

www.wraba.com

Vancouver Island Blacksmith's Association

www.viblacksmiths.com

Write me a letter, send it by (e)mail . . .

When your email address changes, please remember to notify newsletter editor Susan Gawecki (information below). Members who receive the *F&P* electronically save the guild money and see the newsletter sooner.

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